

REMARKS

Claims 1-17, as amended, remain herein. Claims 4, 8, 13, and 16 are currently withdrawn from consideration. Claims 6, 7, 10, and 15 have been amended to clarify that the low point recited in applicants' claims is the "dynamic-contact low point."

Claims 1-3, 4-7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15 and 17 were rejected under §102(e) over Shimazaki U.S. Patent Application Publication US 2003/00181259 A1, published September 25, 2003. Claim 11 was rejected under §103(a) over the same Shimazaki '259 reference.

Applicants' claims are for an iron-type golf club head comprising a substantially planar face having an imaginary centerline lying in an imaginary centerline plane orthogonal to the planar club head face, with a dynamic-contact low point of the sole and the center of gravity of the club head lying in that centerline plane when that plane is substantially vertical. See claims 6-17. Claims 1-5 recite an iron-type golf club head having a static contact point SCP on its sole, which SCP is substantially vertically below the center of gravity CG when the club head is in an address position.

As explained in paragraph [0007], the term "address position" in applicants' specification and claims means a position wherein the toe of the club head is slightly raised, as shown in Fig. 2, so that the static contact point SCP of the club head with the ground is heel-biased, that is, located somewhat toward the heel, from the centerline plane. Thus, in the "address position," as used herein, the centerline plane is not vertical, but is tilted toward the heel and hosel of the club head. As explained in paragraph [0006], "[D]uring a golf swing, the shaft of a golf club bows outwardly away from the body of the player swinging the club, causing the toe of the club head to droop slightly." This describes a dynamic condition. Thus, in applicants' claimed invention,

the club head is intentionally designed to have a static address position, like that schematically illustrated in Fig. 2, wherein the static contact point (SCP) is in contact with the horizontal ground plane, but the centerline is not vertical, so that during dynamic swinging of a club comprising such a club head, at the point of ball/ground plane contact, the centerline plane is vertical, and the dynamic-contact low point and center of gravity lie in that vertical centerline plane.

The disclosure of the cited Shimazaki '259 application is directed entirely to static design aspects of a club head and is silent about dynamic performance and design of such a club head. Paragraph [0012] of Shimazaki discloses adjustment of the static lie angle of a club so that in its address position "the sole surface of the golf club head is adjusted so that the toe-side and heel-side gaps [or angles] α_1 and α_2 are equal to each other with respect to a reference plane (the level of horizontal surface plate)." Thus, Shimazaki's static contact point appears to lie in a vertical plane that also contains the center of gravity.

This is different from applicants' invention as recited in claims 1-5 and 10-17, wherein the centerline plane in applicants' "address position" is not vertical but is tilted toward the heel of the club head and the static contact point SCP is heel-biased, not in the centerline plane.

Not only is Shimazaki's static contact point different from the static contact point SCP as recited in applicants' claims 1-5 and 10-17, but Shimazaki also does not teach that the static contact point lies substantially vertically below the center of gravity of the club head. Shimazaki discloses a static contact point that lies in the same vertical plane with the center of gravity of the club head, but Shimazaki does not teach a heel-biased static contact point SCP located

substantially vertically (collinearly) below the center of gravity. And, Shimazaki does not teach that in Shimazaki's address position such plane is not vertical, but is tilted heelward.

Moreover, in dynamic use, Shimazaki's club head, like all club heads, will droop, so that at ball/ground impact heel-side gap α_2 will be greater than toe-side gap α_1 , the dynamic low point of such a club head will be toe-ward (i.e. toe-biased) from the static contact point illustrated in Shimazaki's Fig. 6, and the static-contact-point/center-of-gravity plane of such a club head will be oblique (tilted toward the toe), not perpendicular to a horizontal reference plane. The above-discussed static condition disclosed in Shimazaki is quite significantly different from applicants' invention as recited in claims 6-17, wherein, as explained above, applicants' dynamic-contact low point, center of gravity, and centerline all lie in the centerline plane, which is substantially vertical at dynamic ball/ground impact.

Thus, for all the foregoing reasons, there is no disclosure or teaching in Shimazaki of all elements of applicants' claimed invention, so Shimazaki is not a proper basis for rejecting applicants' claims under §102. Similarly, there is no disclosure or teaching in Shimazaki which would have suggested applicants' claimed invention to one of ordinary skill in the art, so Shimazaki is not a proper basis for rejecting applicants' claims under §103. Accordingly reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections, and allowance of all claims 1-17 are respectfully requested.

Thus, this application is now fully in condition for allowance. The Commissioner is authorized to charge/credit any required fees or refunds from/to the applicants' attorneys' Deposit Account No. 19-429 (Order No. 28952.5628). Should the Examiner believe that further changes

Application Serial No.: 10/748,670
Docket No.: 28952.5628

would place this application in even better condition for issue, the Examiner is invited to telephone applicants' undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

STEPTOE & JOHNSON

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger W. Parkhurst", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Roger W. Parkhurst
Reg. No. 25,177

Date: April 17, 2006

STEPTOE & JOHNSON LLP
1330 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036
Tel: 202-429-3000
Fax: 202-429-3902

RWP/GPM/tlpdg